300 soldiers in the city of Alessandria. For his actions, he was awarded a division citation and accepted the key to Alessandria on behalf of his battalion. Subsequently Plourde would receive a field promotion to the rank of Captain, a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart, and a Distinguished Unit Badge for his heroism. Citing his effectiveness under fire and his personal concern for the men under his command, Plourde's commanding officer Major Mitsuyoshi Fukuda wrote that he had "won the highest respect from both the men and the officers within the 100th Battalion."

Today, Thomas Plourde's daughter, Janet Barrett, will accept the Congressional Gold Medal on behalf of her father for his courageous service in the war. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award in the United States. The decoration is awarded to an individual who performs an outstanding deed or act of service for the security, prosperity, and national interest of the country. Mainers have a long tradition of service in the armed forces. I am proud of Lt. Colonel Plourde's place in that history. His remarkable leadership and heroism in the face of unspeakable evil will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Lt. Colonel Thomas Plourde of Lewiston, Maine, for his distinguished service to this country.

PENNY FOOLISH

HON. STEVEN R. ROTHMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Mr. ROTHMAN of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about common cents.

Currently it costs more than a penny for the U.S. Mint to make a one cent coin and more than a nickel to make the five cent piece. This problem is currently being examined at the request of the U.S. Mint.

Over the next two years, a Pennsylvania company has been contracted by the Mint to conduct research and development for more economical alternative metallic materials for the production of all circulating coins.

As this study begins, I would like to submit into the Record one possible solution, offered by David L. Ganz, a friend of mine, a member of the Board of Freeholders of Bergen County, N.J., and a former president of the American Numismatic Association.

In an op-ed in the Sunday New York Times from August 21, 2011, Mr. Ganz took on the issue of the penny and proposes a specific solution, which I hope that the study will review along with other alternatives.

[From New York Times, Aug. 20, 2011]

PENNY FOOLISH

(By David L. Ganz)

In this time of fiscal strain, Americans can find some savings by simply looking in their purses and pockets.

Because of increases in commodity prices, it now costs more than one cent to make a penny and more than five cents to make a nickel. The United States Mint, sensitive to the risks of changing the composition and feel of our coinage, has been reluctant to revise the composition of these two coins.

But that is precisely what the Mint—which last year produced 4 billion pennies and 490 million nickels—should do.

While eliminating the penny has been debated for decades, it is not a realistic option; the penny has tremendous symbolic value and removing it would have the effect of raising prices—particularly for people of modest means, who use currency the most—because retailers would round up. Reducing the size of the coins is impractical because of the cost of recalibrating vending machines and the need to ensure that the coin is not interchangeable with any foreign coin.

Changing the composition of the penny by using less costly materials is the only feasible alternative. The Mint, part of the Treasury Department, has changed the size or composition of the cent more than a dozen times since 1793. Two of the most recent alterations were the switch to zinc-coated steel in 1943, caused by the wartime shortage of copper, and the switch to zinc with copper plating in 1982, a response to rising commodity prices.

Past debates have brought forth a variety of unconventional suggestions: plastic (used as sales-tax tokens—representing fractions of a cent—in the 1930s, but cheap-looking), industrial porcelain (Germany and Thailand tried this, but it breaks easily); and vulcanite rubber (used as currency in Guatemala early in the last century, but too exotic for American tastes).

Metallic alloys are probably the best choice for a new-composition penny and nickel. The precise choice needs to reflect four values: cost effectiveness, security of supply, aesthetic acceptability and minimal disruption to vending machines. (Pennies are not commonly accepted by machines, but are sometimes inserted anyway; a penny of a different composition could cause machines to jam.)

In a 1976 study of the penny, the Research Triangle Institute rejected chromium, tin, titanium, copper-aluminum-nickel-zinc derivatives and zinc mixtures. At current prices, none of these would be cost-effective. In practical terms, that leaves two basic metallic groups: an aluminum alloy, which is better, heavier and stronger than the pure aluminum cent proposed in the 1970s, but still expensive, and steel, which is the clear favorite for affordability and security, but poses technical challenges.

The best approach is to meld the two. Aluminized steel is ideal because it is available coiled—squeezed by rollers and then put into a lasso-like form that can be fed directly into a coining press. It would work for the penny and the nickel—and the dime, if it is ever threatened.

Let's use a new aluminized-steel alloy that allows the Mint to produce an affordable penny. Ideally, this would be accompanied by a redesign, and a collector's-edition one-cent coin made of gold and silver. This would complement the success the Mint has had with the state quarters program and with collectors' coins made of precious metals.

Contrary to the song, pennies do not come from heaven. Ours come from the Mint, which must supply them now and in the future. Let's reintroduce the penny as a coin that matters, and put its production on a sounder financial footing.

HONORING PATRICK HYLAND ON HIS DISTINGUISHED CAREER AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NORTHEAST PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mr. Patrick Hyland, who, for more than 22 years, has served with distinction as executive director of the Northeast Public Power Association.

Under Pat Hyland's leadership, the Northeast Public Power Association has been the leading voice for 79 consumer-owned utilities that provide energy to more than two million citizens in the six New England states of Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Over the years, Pat Hyland has worked closely with Members of the New England delegation, from both sides of the aisle, to advance the interest of NEPPA consumers in New England. Under the leadership of their local elected energy boards, NEPPA utilities are responsible for providing reliable electric services at affordable prices throughout the region.

Pat Hyland is well known throughout the New England Congressional delegation for his integrity and forthrightness. He has played a pivotal role in advocating on behalf of NEPPA utilities that deliver vital electricity, and in some cases water services, on a non-profit, publicly-accountable basis to consumers in small and large communities throughout New England.

To highlight just two of his successes, Pat has effectively spearheaded legislative efforts to increase awareness of impacts to consumers in New England—who are also our constituents—of wholesale and retail competition, including the creation of Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), and energy capacity markets and the implementation of key transmission rate policies.

Throughout his career, Pat Hyland has been actively involved in federal energy policy. He was a key resource to me during the debate over the amendment that I successfully offered to provide for open transmission access when Congress enacted the Energy Policy Act of 1992; he was a voice of caution regarding the need to ensure appropriate consumer and investor protections in the event of a repeal of the Public Utility Holding Company Act in the Energy Policy Act of 2005; and he was a leader in the effort to obtain comparable renewable incentives for the customers of consumer-owned utilities.

He has also taken the lead to increase consumer awareness about the impact of wholesale and retail competition and operations of Regional Transmission Organizations.

My personal and professional respect and admiration for Pat runs deep, and I wish him happiness and good health in his retirement. The wise counsel, calm determination, and good Irish sense-of-humor, which he has provided to me and others in Congress for many years on behalf of NEPPA, will be sorely missed.

I am told that one of the highlights of Pat's life was to meet the legendary Celtics basketball player Bob Cousey. I understand that, because over the last 20 years Pat Hyland has been New England's public power "point guard": taking control of the game, mastering it with wizardry and elegance, and dazzling fans.

And so I wish today, Mr. Speaker to say to Pat, thank you for your service. We will miss you and we wish you well.